LAFAYETTE VISTAS

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The Virtuous Cycle

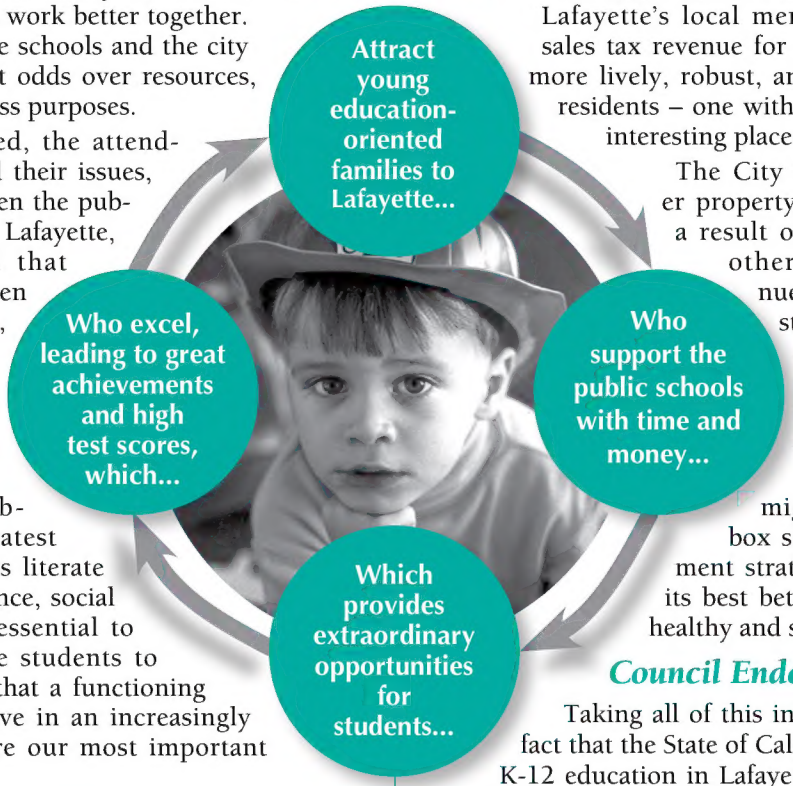
Why Lafayette and its Public Schools are Getting Better and Better

A couple of years ago, Lafayette's mayor and city manager joined the school district superintendent and governing board chairperson at a regional meeting in Berkeley. The purpose of the conference was to help the many cities and school districts in the Bay Area work better together. Apparently, in many places, the schools and the city don't communicate well, are at odds over resources, or are otherwise working at cross purposes.

As the meeting commenced, the attendees introduced themselves and their issues, often describing tension between the public agencies. When it came to Lafayette, however, the mayor noted that there is little acrimony between the city and schools because, "the City harbors no illusions about our relative position in the community. We understand that the public schools are the most important thing."

Indeed, Lafayette's public schools are our city's greatest asset. They make our students literate and provide grounding in science, social studies and the other fields essential to civic discourse. They prepare students to make the informed decisions that a functioning democracy requires, and to live in an increasingly complex society. And they are our most important instruments of social justice.

Lafayette's Great Public Schools. . .



How the Schools Benefit the City

While Lafayette's schools are already among the top-rated schools in the entire State of California, they continue to improve via **the virtuous cycle**, which might be described like the cycle illustrated on this page.

The benefits of Lafayette's excellent public schools, however, go beyond the students. The City and its residents also prosper, in several ways.

First, and most obviously, when it comes time to choose a house, Lafayette's top quality schools entice young, education-minded to browse our neighborhoods. These families compete for homes, which drives up real estate prices and, concomitantly, property tax revenues to the City. The beneficial impact of good schools on local property values is undisputed; study after study prove that homes in higher-performing school districts sell for higher prices than homes in lower performing school districts *(source: http://goo.gl/ScGvo)*.

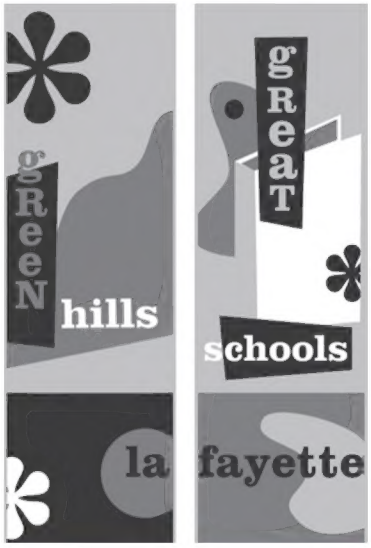
Second, good schools positively impact the local economy. Those same young families that choose to relocate in Lafayette for the schools tend to spend more money, relative to other households, at local restaurants and businesses. This not only supports Lafayette's local merchants (and generates more sales tax revenue for the City), but also provides a more lively, robust, and vibrant downtown area for residents – one with increasingly more variety and interesting places to visit, shop, and dine.

The City then benefits from the higher property and sales taxes generated as a result of Lafayette's schools. Among other things, these added revenues help the City to pave more streets, employ more police officers, and purchase and preserve more open space – all of which makes Lafayette safer and more livable.

And so, while other cities might chase auto malls and big box stores as an economic development strategy, Lafayette recognizes that its best bet is to keep the public schools healthy and strong.

Council Endorses Measure B

Taking all of this into account, and in light of the fact that the State of California has reduced funding for K-12 education in Lafayette by 18% over the past three years, the Lafayette City Council adopted a resolution at its regular meeting on March 14th to formally endorse Measure B, a, four year, temporary tax measure proposed by the Lafayette School District. The ballot measure states that the proceeds of the parcel tax will be used to "maintain core academic programs in math, science, art and music, attract and retain the best qualified teachers, and maintain classroom technology and science labs."



And the Winner Is…

The City of Lafayette is Honored by Statewide Association With Award of Excellence for Its Library & Learning Center

It had never been tried before, this idea to redevelop a blighted site with a stunning public facility and gather twelve preeminent educational and cultural institutions together to create a learning community greater than the sum of its parts. It had never been tried before, this collaboration of zoo keepers and Shakespearean thespians, of planetary scientists and greenbelt advocates, of university professors and museum curators, all gathering in a single place – a stone, wood, and glass library – where children, parents, and grandparents are enriched by great literature, research technology, afternoon programs, nighttime exhibits, civic lectures, beautiful music, spoken words, expert classes, and hands-on workshops. It had never been tried before. Until now. Lafayette transformed the heart of our downtown into a national model of life-long learning.

Recognizing the enormous amount of community support, vision and effort that was necessary to accomplish this gargantuan goal, the California Redevelopment Association (CRA) has bestowed the **2011 Award of Excellence** on the Lafayette Library & Learning Center. In awarding the honor, the CRA cited not only the specific design features that make the building ecologically sustainable, they also acknowledged that the Lafayette Library and Learning Center (LLLC) illustrates the value of redevelopment in a community.

While attendance and material circulation at the library have tripled, those are not the only benefits of this project. New economic interest has recently been stimulated in this underutilized section of the downtown. A major non-profit organization is considering building a mixed-use affordable housing project that would include retail and a public park on the site of what is now a 1950s apartment building across the street from the LLLC. The property owner of the auto body shop next door to the LLLC is looking to redevelop by converting the building into mixed-use retail and office. Whole Foods will be opening a new store in a vacant space one block from the LLLC. With public meetings now being held in downtown, restaurants and food services around the LLLC are seeing more business.

This honor serves as a great bookend to the one received in 2006 for the Veterans Memorial Building when the City won the prestigious **Helen Putnam Award for Excellence**. Established in 1982 by the League of California Cities, the Helen Putnam Award recognizes California cities that have made unique contributions that result in lower costs or more effective delivery of services. The Veterans project was recognized in the category of Effective Advocacy, Intergovernmental Relations and Regional Cooperation and was cited as a "win" for everyone involved: honoring veterans; providing a beautiful, modern, accessible regional facility; clearing property for reuse in downtown Walnut Creek; providing land for a new public library in downtown Lafayette; and relieving the County of the financial burden of maintaining two veterans' facilities. The Helen Putnam award is the highest honor that a California city can achieve.

Farmers & Flicks

Break out the Popcorn – It's Movie Time in the Plaza!

This summer, as part of our ongoing effort to enliven downtown, the City of Lafayette and the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce are planning, once again, to screen outdoor movies in Lafayette Plaza. On the third Thursday of each month – starting in May and running through August – a different family-friendly movie will be shown starting at dusk (around 8:00 pm). Last year's trial run of Monster's Inc. was a huge hit, and we're delighted to bring back this community event once a month. The movies will follow the Farmer's Market at sundown and be free of charge.

Invite your friends, family, and neighbors, bring a blanket or two, and stake out your spot. For dinner, you can put together a fresh and delicious picnic from the Farmer's Market or pick-up a meal to go at one of the nearby restaurants. Sweets and drinks will also be available for purchase.

Adding to the fun, each evening raffle prizes will be awarded. Donations will also be collected at each showing with all proceeds going towards maintaining this event as a recurring summer series next year and beyond.

Volunteers needed! We believe the downtown movie project will be a big hit, but we need help to make it happen! Who out there would like to help coordinate, manage, and raise funds for this project? Here's your chance to donate a few hours and make a big contribution to your downtown. If you are interested, please give Lindy Chan or Michael Cass a call at 284-1968.

Movie Schedule

Date	Title	Rating
May 19	E.T.	PG
June 16	How to Train Your Dragon	PG
July 21	Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark	PG
Aug 18	Finding Nemo	G

Where Did They Go?

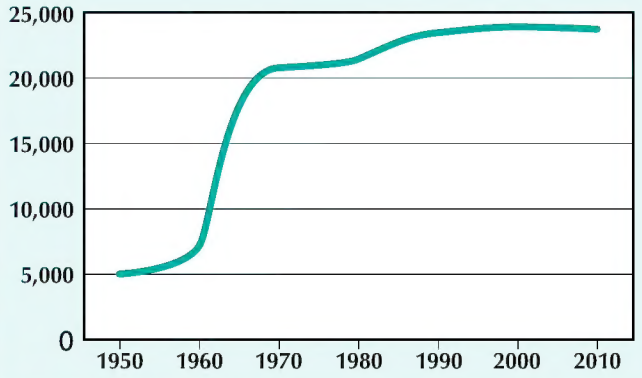
Lafayette Loses Fifteen People in Recent Census

The 2010 census was released last month and it should put to rest any lingering concern that Lafayette is growing too fast. In fact, Lafayette's population actually declined over the last ten years, and the 2010 count of 23,983 residents is down by 15 people compared to the 2000 census.

Given the census' other finding that Lafayette added 317 new housing units during the same period, our declining population is a little surprising. But, then again, it comports with our society's trend toward smaller families and reflects what must be a decline in the average household size.

Looking at population over the longer term, Lafayette has added a total of 482 residents since 1990, which averages out to 24 people – or just ten families – per year over the last twenty years. Not exactly your high growth community.

Lafayette's Population



Regarding racial makeup, with 81% of the residents self-reporting as white, Lafayette is still rather monochromatic but the longer view, indicated in the table below, suggests that Lafayette's racial makeup is changing – and that the rate of change is quickening.

Racial Composition of Lafayette

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
White	99%	96%	89%	84%	81%
Asian	<1	3	6	8	9
Hispanic	<1	<1	4	4	6
Black	<1	<1	1	1	1
Other	<1	<1	<1	3	3

Sources: bayareacensus.ca.gov; dof.ca.gov

In The News

New Development at 2nd Street?

The Design Review Commission held a study session earlier this year with Merrill Gardens for a senior assisted living facility at the corner of Second Street and Mt. Diablo Blvd. The 35' tall project will contain 72 independent/assisted living apartments, a 16-bed memory care facility, ~6,000 sq. ft. of retail space along Mt. Diablo Blvd., two roof top decks, a small plaza on Mt. Diablo Blvd. and underground parking facilities with 75 spaces. The Design Review Commission was supportive of the project at this stage, including its orientation, mixed use component, public space, the retail connection to the street and the celebration of the southern exposure.

More Public Parking on the Way

Two decades ago, in response to a lack of on-street parking downtown, the City Council ordered the first-ever installation of parking meters in Lafayette. Recognizing that the move might not be entirely popular, the Council stipulated that all of the proceeds from those meters be put into a special account to be used, later, to acquire additional free off-street parking. It took twenty years, but those quarters do eventually add up, and last fall the City purchased the parcels at 941 Moraga Road, across from Lafayette School. Earlier this year, city crews tore down the old pink house and Farmers Insurance shack and scraped the lot clean. Soon we'll put down some base rock and make the lot available to the public for parking.

Discover & Go: Reserve & Print Museum Passes

What if the library bought annual museum passes and then let patrons check them out? The Lafayette Library and Learning Center recently launched Discover & Go, a service that provides library cardholders with free passes to local museums and cultural institutions. The program allows library users to make reservations online and immediately print out a pass (or print later for free at any branch library). Customers without Internet access can reserve a pass by telephone or in person. Since each Discover & Go pass expires immediately after the reservation date, there are no returns required and no possibility for overdue fines. Library cardholders can reserve up to two passes per month from a growing list of destinations:

- Asian Art Museum
- Blackhawk Museum
- Charles M. Schulz Museum
- Cartoon Art Museum
- Habitot Children's Museum
- Lindsay Wildlife Museum
- Town Hall Theatre
- USS Hornet
- Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive
- Cal Shakes: California Shakespeare Theatre
- Contemporary Jewish Museum
- The Marine Mammal Center
- Museum of Craft and Folk Art
- Oakland Museum of California
- San Jose Museum of Art
- Vallejo Naval and Historical Museum
- Zeum: San Francisco's Children's Museum

With the Discover & Go program, patrons of Contra Costa County libraries now get free or reduced cost access to many of the Bay Area's best museums and cultural attractions, thereby proving that libraries are, indeed, portals to the world.

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Around Town

April 5 **THE DARK SIDE OF MOBILE GADGETS** • 6:30pm, Lafayette Library and Learning Center. In an age when personal technology devices reign supreme, consumers take gadgets for granted. Award-winning journalist and cybercrimes expert Robert Vamosi contends that the dangers inherent in certain gadgets far surpass their convenience. As technologies continue to develop, people continue to trust them, blindly, sacrificing their privacy and safety in ways they never imagined. **www.commonwealthclub.org**

April 21 **THE SCIENCE OF GENIUSES** • 6:30pm, Lafayette Library and Learning Center. Meet local winners of the 2010 MacArthur Genius Grant! Carlos Bustamante, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Genetics, Stanford University School of Medicine; Dawn Song, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Dept of Electrical Engineering & Computer Science, UC Berkeley; and Emmanuel Saez, Ph.D., E. Morris Cox, Professor of Economics, UC Berkeley.

April 23 **BUNNY BRUNCH & FAMILY FUN** • 11am-12:30pm, Lafayette Community Center. Buy tickets at the Lafayette Community Center: $7/person (Adv. Sale before 4/22), $9/person (Day of Event). A fund-raiser for the Lafayette Community Center.

May 1 **LAS TRAMPAS FUNDRAISER "WHAT'S IN OUR HAT?"** • 3:00-6:30pm, Lafayette Park Hotel, Tickets: $100/person, includes a chance to win $10,000 from this year's hat – a French beret celebrating this year's theme: The French Connection! Proceeds support adults with developmental disabilities. Info: Bonnie Peacock, 925-284-1462 ext. 239, or **ltrampas@pacbell.net.**

May 2 **GOLD COAST CHAMBER PLAYERS AMATI GOLD** • 2:00pm As part of their world-wide tour, the esteemed Amati Ensemble from Europe joins the Gold Coast Chamber Players for their West Coast debut. Tickets online: **http://gcplayers.tix.com** or call 925-283-3728.

May 6 **SENIOR SYMPOSIUM** • 8:30am-12:30pm, Temple Isaiah, Learn the secrets to dynamic aging from renowned speakers Houston Robertson and Dr. Happy (Dr. Robert Nozik). Lafayette Community Foundation will host their third community-wide Symposium highlighting topics of vital interest to midlife and older adults. Info: **www.lafayettecommunityfoundation.org** or call 925-284-8214.

May 6 **FATHER/DAUGHTER DANCE** • 7:00-9:00pm, Lafayette Community Center, Live Oak Room, $20/couple (additional daughter $10). Evening includes a DJ (playing age-appropriate music), dancing, arts and crafts, a special memento of the evening, cake and punch.

May 14 **LAFAYETTE JUNIORS 12TH ANNUAL LAFAYETTE KITCHEN TOUR** • 10:00am-3:00pm. Guests will have the opportunity to visit six exquisite kitchens in Lafayette. Tickets: $35, ($25 of which is tax deductible). Tickets may be purchased in advance from a Lafayette Juniors member, online at **www.lafayettejuniors.org**, or at one of the following Lafayette locations: Douglah Designs, 3577 Mt. Diablo Blvd., 925-284-4560 or Premier Kitchens, 3373 Mt. Diablo Blvd., 925-283-6500.

City Directory

For Council Members call: **284-1968**

Council Members

Carl Anduri	**Mayor**
Carol Federighi	**Vice Mayor**
Brandt Andersson	**Council Member**
Mike Anderson	**Council Member**
Don Tatzin	**Council Member**

Messages to **all** Council Members:
cityhall@lovelafayette.org

Administration

General Reception and	**284-1968**
Steven Falk, City Manager	**Fax: 284-3169**
Tracy Robinson, Admin. Srv. Dir.	**299-3227**
Gonzalo Silva, Financial Srv. Mgr.	**299-3213**
Joanne Robbins, City Clerk	**299-3210**

Community Development

Tony Coe, Engineering Srv. Mgr.	**284-1951**
Niroop Srivatsa, Planning Srv. Mgr.	**284-1976**
Ron Lefler, Public Works Srv. Mgr.	**299-3214**
P.W. Hotline (to report problems)	**299-3259**

If you observe illegal dumping in creeks & storm drains or accidental spills on roads, call Contra Costa Hazardous Materials Division 646-2286.

Lamorinda School Bus Program

Juliet Hansen, Program Mgr.	**299-3216**
	Or 299-3215

Parks, Trails and Recreation **284-2232**

Jennifer Russell, Director	
Senior Services	**284-5050**

Police Services

Emergency: 24 Hours	**911**
Police Dispatch: 24 Hours	**284-5010**
Police Business Office:	**283-3680**

Anonymous Tipline, Traffic Enforcement, Suggestions & LEARN (Laf. Emergency Action Response Network), 299-3232 X 2205

Fax	**284-3169**
Address	**3675 Mt. Diablo Blvd. #210** **Lafayette, CA 94549**
Website	**www.ci.lafayette.ca.us**

E-MAIL: Council/staff members can be reached via e-mail using this address format:
First Initial + Last Name @lovelafayette.org
Example: SFalk@lovelafayette.org

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